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SUBJECT: ITURI UPDATE: FRPI MILITIA AGREES TO JOIN
DEMOBILIZATION PROCESS

REF: KINSHASA 1769

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

11. (C) Summary: The Patriotic Front for Resistance in Ituri (FRPI) militia led by Cobra Matata has agreed to demobilize. The agreement follows November 18 discussions between the GDRC and the FRPI that the militia's future participation in the program (reftel). The FRPI has placed some conditions on its decision, but Matata himself has agreed to begin disarmament December 11. End summary.

12. (C) On November 28, a GDRC delegation led by Ituri Operations Commander General Vainqueur Mayala, together with MONUC military Chief of Staff General Christian Houdet, met FRPI leader Matata in Aveba, approximately 28 miles south of Bunia. FRPI representatives had agreed November 18 to a set of principles for its disarmament (reftel). Matata and the group's "spiritual leader" Bahinda Abayunga Kakado, accepted this agreement November 22 and said they were willing to hold further discussions with the GDRC.

13. (C) Matata and FRPI representatives told the delegation they were willing to join the demobilization process immediately if the government established transit and training sites in Aveba or nearby Tchei. Matata and his advisers asked for a deadline of January 31 to prepare their members for disarmament, an extension of one month past the December 31 date agreed earlier.

14. (C) Mayala reportedly said establishing sites in Aveba or Tchei would be impossible due to logistical, financial and operational constraints imposed by the December 31 demobilization deadline. The FRPI groups then agreed to begin demobilizing December 11 at sites in Bunia and Rwampara, about 12 miles southeast of Bunia.

15. (C) Mayala told the FRPI members the GDRC is willing to fulfill the principles of the November 18 agreement. He stated that the issue of granting amnesty will be dealt with by the new parliament when it convenes. Mayala said Defense Minister Tharcisse Habarugira has recommended that prosecutions be suspended pending the enactment of the DRC's amnesty law.

16. (C) Colonel Andre Matutezulwa, special adviser for integration issues at the Defense Ministry, confirmed Habarugira's recommendation. He said the Minister wrote November 27 to the auditor general to suspend all legal proceedings against the leaders of Ituri's militias until the new parliament implemented the amnesty law. Habarugira stated that the process of integration and demobilization of the militias should be allowed to continue and cautioned that

threats of prosecution could undermine progress in this area. Matutezulwa said this letter is not a formal grant of amnesty; it simply promises militia leaders they will not be prosecuted until the amnesty law is promulgated.

¶7. (C) Comment: Matata was the last of the Ituri militia leaders to agree to disarm and his decision is another important step in resolving the area's insecurity problems. It is becoming clearer, though, that the GDRC is postponing the amnesty question (which in any case would exclude war crimes and crimes against humanity) for as much as possible. Without a formal agreement, the GDRC's initiative to demobilize Ituri's militias will be unsuccessful. End comment.
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